

Twenty-First Annual Report

MARYLAND STATE BOARD

OF

MOTION PICTURE CENSORS



1936 - 1937

OFFICES

211 NORTH CALVERT STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Twenty-First Annual Report

MARYLAND STATE BOARD

OF

MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

1936-1937

BEN PAUL SANDY, D. D. S.
Chairman

ELIZABETH J. RYON
Vice-Chairman and Treasurer

MARIE WHITE PRESSTMAN
Secretary

HELEN L. ODOM
Chief Clerk

OFFICES

211 NORTH CALVERT STREET
BALTIMORE - MARYLAND

HON. HARRY W. NICE,
Governor of Maryland,
Annapolis, Maryland.

SIR:

I have the honor to present the report of the Maryland State Board of Motion Picture Censors for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1937. Appended to the report is an itemized statement of receipts and disbursements.

The records of the Board show that 2,576 original films and 10,607 duplicate films were dealt with during the year. The Board approved 12,983 films, rejected 5 films in toto, and ordered deletions in 195. Two of the rejected films were later passed in reconstructed form. Figures for the past several years show a substantial decrease in the subjects requiring deletions or rejection by the Board. This is attributed in great measure to the effectiveness of the Production Code Administration adopted in 1930 in answer to the public demand for pictures conforming to proper standards, especially in states and cities not protected by local censor boards.

The industry has likewise made great strides in controlling advertising of a suggestive and sensational character. Where a few years past we had "millions conditioned to the suggestive and sensational," today the number of clean and artistic films is equal to the demand of an ever increasing movie public.

The chief concern of the censors is the output of studios which do not conform to the Code. Among these are the "purveyors of obscenity and sensationalism" who hope to find a loophole in censorship regulations by appeals to Court from the rulings of Censor Boards. The latter are frequently successful. If newspapers would refuse to carry advertising of pictures which fall below standard, the box office value of such films would decline to the vanishing point. Practically the entire industry has accepted the Code as a "base line of decency and good taste" in motion picture production. Many current films are not only successful entertainments but also important social documents.

The production of pictures based on the great works of drama and literature is one of the leading trends of today, while salacious films are frowned upon by producers who are increasingly aware that their own interests are best served by providing the public with wholesome fare.

Irresponsible interests, ever seeking to capitalize on human weaknesses, continue to debase the public taste. Health films which are exploited unscrupulously often create an environment dangerous to the public welfare. It is the opinion of the Board that clinical subjects should be exhibited only under the proper auspices.

Propaganda films representing the viewpoint of extremist groups are also highly controversial subjects. The Maryland Board has adopted a liberal point of view in dealing with this class of films in conformity with legal precedent and the established practise of the Federal authorities who have admitted many films of this type into the country.

Domestic and imported "clinical" films and "bootleg" films of various types are in circulation in this state as elsewhere. These films are invariably obscene and indecent, and whenever seized are subject to police court prosecution. Frequently the Board receives complaints of objectionable shows and indecent literature distributed in connection with motion picture exhibitions. The Board refers all such complaints to the local authorities as the law has not vested this Board with control over stage productions or the press.

The Board desires to express its appreciation of the able assistance rendered by the legal departments of the State and City, and to yourself as Chief Executive we express our appreciation of your loyal support and cooperation at all times.

Respectfully submitted,

BEN PAUL SANDY
Chairman

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

For the Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 1937

RECEIPTS

FEES:

Original Reels (7,320,447 feet)	\$15,938.00	
Duplicate Reels (29,146,943 feet)	32,271.00	
Sale of Substitute Seals (1,049)	1,049.00	
Fines	35.00	
		<u>\$49,293.00</u>

TOTAL RECEIPTS:

Remitted to State Treasurer	<u>\$49,293.00</u>
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EXPENSES

Salaries and Wages	\$22,547.67	
Office Supplies and Stationery	290.90	
Printing	272.34	
Film Approval Seals	1,288.00	
Motion Picture Machine Supplies	101.34	
Light, Heat, Power and Water	251.61	
Traveling	587.44	
Communication	463.91	
Insurance	55.00	
Motion Picture Equipment	522.34	
Rent	2,280.00	
Office Equipment	194.55	
		<u>\$28,855.10</u>

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

For the Fiscal Year Ended September 30, 1937

BUDGET ACCOUNT (PER COMPTROLLER)

Appropriation, 1937.....	\$29,267.00	
Refunds to Credit of Budget.....	17.00	
		\$29,284.00
Less—Disbursements by the State		
Treasurer for Expenses.....		28,855.10
Unexpended Balance, September 30,		
1937.....		<u>\$428.90</u>

WORKING FUND

Total Working Fund on Deposit, Union		
Trust Company, September 30,		
1937.....		<u>\$369.00</u>

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS
REPORT OF FILMS EXAMINED

October 1, 1936—September 30, 1937

	Films Original	Films Duplicate	Reels Original	Reels Duplicate	No. Feet Original	No. Feet Duplicate	Films Approved	Films Rejected	Films Eliminated
October . . .	261	922	982	2,883	888,374	2,602,143	1,159	1	23
November . .	203	785	641	2,468	528,432	2,101,329	977	0	11
December . .	237	956	814	2,755	672,624	2,357,831	1,173	0	20
January . . .	208	853	670	2,915	564,666	2,452,159	1,052	0	9
February . . .	205	817	696	2,453	621,438	2,090,155	1,006	2	14
March	209	936	665	3,241	581,872	2,593,696	1,131	0	14
April	216	884	748	2,827	644,185	2,399,273	1,090	0	10
May	203	878	703	3,110	591,317	2,622,441	1,079	1	1
June	235	948	744	3,269	624,457	2,755,810	1,169	0	14
July	192	876	660	2,847	551,995	2,491,764	1,029	0	39
August	206	815	624	2,633	519,018	2,203,163	1,009	1	11
September . .	201	937	629	2,906	532,069	2,477,179	1,109	0	29
	2,576	10,607	8,576	34,307	7,320,447	29,146,943	12,983	*5	195

* Two later passed in reconstructed form.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Films, Original	2,576	....	....	....
Films, Duplicate	10,607	....	....	....
Reels, Original . . . . .	....	8,576	....	....
Reels, Duplicate . . . . .	....	34,307	....	....
Number of Feet, Original . . . . .	....	....	7,320,447	....
Number of Feet, Duplicate . . . . .	....	....	29,146,943	....
Films Approved . . . . .	....	....	....	12,983
Films Rejected . . . . .	....	....	....	5
Films Eliminated . . . . .	....	....	....	195
	13,183	42,883	36,467,390	13,183

CLASSIFICATION OF FILMS
October 1, 1936—September 30, 1937

	Dramas	Comedies	News	Cartoons	Advertising	Miscellaneous
October	339	214	400	72	31	127
November	272	216	351	59	16	74
December	327	257	423	93	12	81
January	323	263	374	54	12	35
February	275	249	365	78	14	41
March	333	268	391	69	26	58
April	324	274	408	64	11	19
May	339	240	395	65	24	18
June	366	296	403	64	20	34
July	324	229	410	69	8	28
August	271	257	409	66	11	7
September	309	293	406	91	6	33
	3,802	3,056	4,735	844	191	555

ELIMINATIONS
October 1, 1936—September 30, 1937

	Dramas Eliminated	Comedies Eliminated	Newsreels Eliminated	Advertising Eliminated	Miscellaneous Eliminated
October	23	..	..	..	..
November	11	..	..	..	..
December	18	..	..	1	1
January	9	..	..	..	..
February	9	5	..	..	..
March	14	..	..	..	..
April	10	..	..	..	..
May, June	1	..	..	..	..
June	14	..	..	..	..
July	39	..	..	..	..
August	11	..	..	..	..
September	10	..	19	..	..
	169	5	19	1	1

PROSECUTIONS

Fine imposed January 14, 1937, by Magistrate Harry Fine, North-western Police Station:
 Albert Rabassa and James A. Scheirim for showing indecent films. \$10.00

Fine imposed January 18, 1937, by Magistrate August F. Mueller, Southern Police Station:
 Louis Jacobson, for showing an uncensored film. \$25.00